

The Kingdom of Denmark.

June 2012.

Following is a short note on the need statement for Greenland, which was first time accepted in the IWC during IWC42. As 2012 is a quota year it seems pertinent to review a few main issues relating to needs. This paper is a supplement to chapter 7 in “*White Paper on Management and utilization of large whales in Greenland, May 2012*”.

Need Statements/Greenland.

- *Who define needs?*

Denmark and Greenland are of the firm conviction that it has to be up to the political responsible organization to define needs in relation to whales subject to IWC management rules. The same political organization, i.e. here the Greenland Government, is also responsible when taking decisions on the utilization of other living resources within their land or EEZ. It is therefore the only organization having the sufficient knowledge to define “needs” which in a Greenlandic context is understood as food security. The political decisions are in Greenland based on scientific knowledge and will in the future also have to take account of the changing size of the population (the number of peoples born in Greenland has increased app. 10% over the last decade).

To quote a precedent. In 1979 a resolution was passed in IWC stating that the need of US aboriginals was determined by the US Government (Chairman’s report on IWC 30, appendix 4).

- *Reflections on needs?*

When reviewing the concept of “needs” it is important to establish a point of departure. How should “needs” be understood? Is it “what is necessary” to attain a healthy diet – an amount each citizen cannot live without? How many kilos per inhabitant per year are strictly necessary? Or do we talk about what a society normally has acquired by hunting whales over the years?

If one whale species was the only source of food for a society, it would be easy to establish needs. It would be the amount of meat necessary to keep one individual alive multiplied with the number of individuals in the society in one year.

If on the other hand there exists more than one source of food in the society in question, then it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to define what is strictly necessary from each source of food to sustain one person for a year.

In Greenland the following can be found – at least – as sources of food:

- “IWC”-Whales (quota and seasonal restrictions – only full time hunters)
- Smaller tooth whales (quota or seasonal restrictions – full time and recreational hunters). Not “IWC”-whales.
- Seals
- Fish (quota or seasonal restrictions – full time and recreational fishermen)
- Birds (seasonal and number restrictions – full time and recreational hunters)
- Caribou (quota and seasonal restrictions – full time and recreational hunters)
- Musk-Ox (quota and season restrictions – full time and recreational hunters)
- Polar bear (quota and seasonal restrictions – only full time hunters)
- Walrus (quota and seasonal restrictions – only full time hunters)
- Sheep
- Imported food.

The amount of food from each source varies due to natural fluctuations during the year in question, the geographical distribution and over the years. Furthermore most of the large marine and terrestrial mammals are rationed under quotas or under seasonal restriction. Polar bear, walrus and large whales can only be hunted by full time hunters, and for the beluga and narwhal minimum 90 percent of the total available catch quota is allocated to full time hunters.

Greenlandic food gathering has always been opportunistic and depending on the season. If a hunter/fisherman sees a whale and have the required equipment and license then this hunter/fisherman will seek to catch that whale. Otherwise that person will fish or hunt seals.

Because of the natural variability of the species over time and during the year, the possibility to substitute between the various sources of food and the opportunistic character of the hunt, it is not possible – *ex ante* – to define the specific need in tons in year X for example for walrus. However, it is possible – *ex post* – to find out how many walruses have been taken over the last decade and with that knowledge to establish an average pr. year, which for administrative reasons and with respect for science is used for future catches.

- The concrete need for whale meat from whales administered by the IWC.

The Greenlandic need for large whale meat for species covered by IWC management rules has been established as follow:

Annual catches (until 1986):

Minke whales, average through 20 yrs. 232 a 2 tons meat	= 464 tons of meat
Fin whales, average through 10 yrs. 9 a 10 tons	= 90 tons of meat
Humpback whales, average through 10 yrs. 14 a 8 tons	= 112 tons of meat
Total	app. 670 tons of meat.

When compared with the population in Greenland this equals app. 12-13 kilo meat pr. inhabitant born in Greenland.

The “buffer” in the food supply is imported food, because agricultural activities in Greenland are minimal not covering the nutritional need at all. The use of imported food has, however, been discouraged because a number of studies have shown that traditional Greenlandic food is cultural, economic and nutritional superior to imported food like chicken, beef and pork or fast food. Whale meat and blubber are by nutritional experts considered beneficial due to the high concentration of selenium, low concentration of saturated fats and high contend of Omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids. Any trend towards imported foods would also lead to an increase in western diseases. It must also be noted that not all places have free access to imported food due to ice cover during winter, where imported food are either not available or limited.

According to a 1977 report from the (now dissolved) Ministry for Greenland the available meat per citizen in Greenland for consumption was (on a yearly basis).

- 61.6 kg seal meat

- 29.4 kg. whale meat
- 8,6 kg Caribou and Polar Bear
- 7.4 kg sheep

In total 107 kg meat per person per year.

Observations of relevance when considering “need”.

- The great variability in the catch of all animals during any one given year (due to climatic variations or variations in the size of the individual groups of animals).
- The substitution between the various prey animals.
- The opportunistic nature of the hunt.
- The nutritional superiority of traditional Greenlandic diet.